



ROMANIA

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON CETACEANS OF THE BLACK AND MEDITERRANEAN SEAS AND CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA (ACCOBAMS)

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1. Scientific research and monitoring

The Black Sea ecosystem is one of the most investigated marine systems in the world with an unique hydrographic and hydro-chemical parameters of environment. In addition, it is an essential fishing area for the Black Sea countries: Romania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia.

The cetaceans from the Black Sea are: *Phocoena phocoena* (porpoise) (Fig. 1), *Tursiops truncatus* (bottlenose dolphin) (Fig.2) and *Delphinus delphis* (common dolphin) (Fig.3).

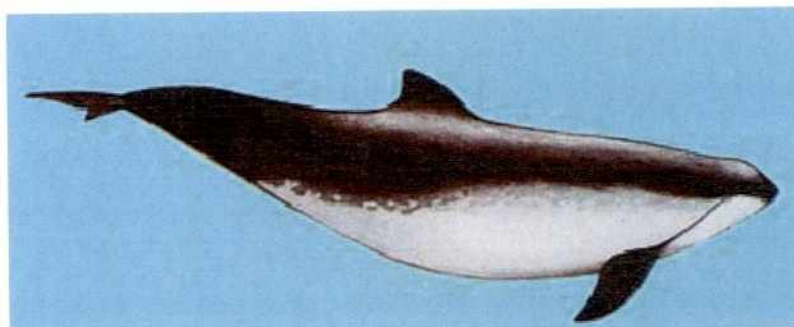
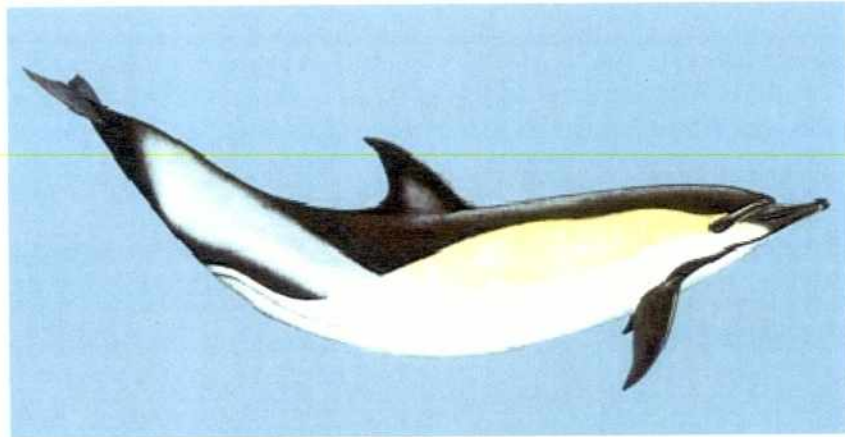


Fig. 1



Fig.2**Fig. 3**

The research programs of the experts from the National Institute for Marine Research and Development „Grigore Antipa” were focused on the following topics: assessments of incidental catching dolphins, analysis of the current fishing practices, assessment of the fishing effort and the risk, elaboration of recommendations supporting dolphins’ protection.

In order to establish the distribution, migration routes and the causes of the mortalities of the dolphins populations, there was raised the necessity for carrying out an analyses of the environmental factors which could influence direct or indirect these aspects.

The impact of fisheries on cetacean populations is consistent. High pressure of fishery resulted in decreasing dolphins populations through: incidental mortality, due to retain or entangle in the fishing gears, diminishing the food sources for dolphins by over-exploitation, illegal fishing, habitats’ degradation of marine species. The gill nets are the most dangerous fishing gears for dolphins which swim for food in the areas where such tools are installed. The dolphins are also endangered by water pollution, lost of habitats, food shortage and microbial

contamination. Every year, on the Romanian Black Sea littoral incidental catches of dolphins and mortalities induced (stranding) by these fishing gears are recorded.

The field investigations revealed that over 95% of dolphins stranded along the Romanian Black Sea coast originated in dolphins accidentally caught in the gill nets. The most affected species is *Phocoena phocoena* that proved to be vulnerable to this type of fishing.

In the period 2011- 2012, 75 expeditions for collecting data on land and on the sea were organized. During the expeditions on land, the experts from the NGO „Mare Nostrum” have been identified a number of 88 stranded dolphins in 2011 and 103 individuals in this year. A number of 73 acoustic devices were used in 7 fisheries in order to reduce by-catches of dolphins.

It was elaborated the first photo identification catalogue for dolphins species.

A data base of the marine mammals which comprises especially the data on dolphins monitoring was designed: strandings (alive or dead), incidentally catches, sightings (land-based, boat-based and aerial).

For monitoring the effects of gear operation, inspection and control activities of own boats and ships, coastal trawler vessels of fisheries companies along the Romanian Black Sea coast and fishermen patrol and inspection vessels of the Border Police Inspectorate of Constanta and the National Agency of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Constanta branch have been used.

2. Education and public awareness

The actions have been taken by the NGO “Mare Nostrum” in collaboration with the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “*Grigore Antipa*” on the reducing the human impact on the conservation status of dolphins. “*Photo-identification of dolphins from the Romanian Black Sea coastal waters*” was a project funded by the ACCOBAMS which covered the South part of Romanian coast.

During the project, the NGO “Mare Nostrum” collected new data about the cetaceans species and increased the awareness of the local community.

- A voluntary network for dolphins’ strandings and sightings surveys at the Romanian Black Sea coast was initiated
- Development of informing materials, ecological education and awareness
- Celebrate the “Dolphin Week” in Constanta, Eforie and Mangalia, on the middle of July
- Build a visitors field Center and undertake pilot dolphin-watching activities
- Mass-media promotional campaigns
- Mount an itinerary exhibition in Dolphinarium, local high schools and other educational institutions
- National consultation workshop with the local stakeholders for the implementation of the National Action Plan for dolphin conservation.
- 2000 personalized T-shirts, calendars, bandanas, badges, stickers, pens, were distributed during the public campaigns
- 36 eco-centers where were distributed materials and 8 awareness campaigns were organized
- Field trips to collect seawater samples and two laboratory kits water testing have been purchased

- Events, posters, grants for schools, scientific papers presented in different national and international workshops, itinerary exhibition and website (www.delfini.cier.ro)

3. Capacity building

- ❖ The project “Strengthening the regional capacity to support the sustainable management of the Black Sea Fisheries”
- ❖ Education/training of fishermen to use a proper handling techniques, released and recorded the dolphins by catches
- ❖ Training course in methodology for field data collection, including sightings and strandings recording
- ❖ Training courses for the fishermen, boarder police and Romanian Navy

4. International cooperation

In October 2011, the European Commission organized a “Brainstorming event on maritime affairs and fisheries in the Black Sea” in cooperation with the Romanian and Bulgarian authorities. A number of options for the future of the Black Sea fisheries were identified as follows: improving regional dialogue, improving research and data collection and improving fisheries control and monitoring.

The “First meeting of the *ad hoc* Working Group on the Black Sea” was held at the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “*Grigore Antipa*,” in Constanta, in 2012. The meeting was attended by 48 experts from the Black Sea riparian countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine), as well as by representatives of the European Union, the Black Sea Commission, the Community Control Fishery Agency, the European Inland Fisheries and

Aquaculture Advisory Commission, EUROFISH and FAO. The priorities in the planning of the regional scientific collaborative activities are to elaborate the unified methodological approaches to the scientific research, to create an integrated database of environmental factors, of marine living organisms, carry out joint scientific and field research, collaborative publications and conference participation, joint training and internship of scientific experts and staff.

The basis for the development of these measures was integrated within a scientific research approach and joint efforts of all interested research institutions and organizations, representatives of the administration, agencies responsible for the environment protection and natural resources, fisheries management organizations of the Black Sea countries.

Joint use of aquatic territory and resources by all the countries of the Black Sea region has necessitated the development of collaborative international activities oriented to the conservation and restoration of the Black Sea marine living resources and their environment.

- ❖ Cooperation between the Black Sea riparian countries for knowing and rationally managing the marine ecosystem and its resources, carrying out diagnostics of fish stocks status as well as advice on management strategies
- ❖ AG FOMLR related to environment management
- ❖ Regional meetings on the implementation of ACCOBAMS resolutions in the Black Sea region
- ❖ Cooperation with the Green Balkans, Bulgaria
- ❖ Development of an integrated infrastructure for providing environmental and oceanographic data for the Western Black Sea (RO and BG)
- ❖ Joint Oceanographic Center (RO/BG)

- ❖ Black Sea Ad-Hoc Working Group on Fisheries
- ❖ Institute of Fishing Resources, Varna, Bulgaria
- ❖ Institute of Oceanography of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, Varna
- ❖ Southern Research Institute of Sea Fisheries and Oceanography, Kerch
- ❖ Central Fisheries Research Institute, Trabzon
- ❖ Black Sea Technical University, Marine Science Faculty, Trabzon
- ❖ European Marine Observation and Data Network
- ❖ CREAM (Coordinated Research in Support of the Application of Ecosystem)

5. Protection of migratory species, conservation measures

The National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" Constanta, in partnership with NGO "Mare Nostrum" and Dolphinarium launched the project "Conservation of the dolphins from the Romanian Black Sea waters", for which it was granted with financial support from European Commission.

“Improving the conservation status of marine biodiversity in the Romanian costal zone, particularly dolphins”, funded by Sectoral Operational Programme Environment was carried out in Danube Delta, the marine area.

- ❖ use of a new type of fishing gear only after an environmental impact study;
- ❖ prohibiting the use of the dredges, of turbot fixed nets with side mesh size under 200 mm and fineness of the yarn under tex 6, 350;
- ❖ prohibiting the use of gill nets without marking their position with buoys and identification marks;

- ❖ marking the brands of gear for establishing their legal affiliation and manufacturing;
- ❖ fitting with devices hidro-acoustic turbot gillnets for preventing the intersection of these tools with dolphins;
- ❖ protect the spawning areas, feeding and wintering fishery.

6. Administrative, legislative, institutional measures

- ❖ Order No. 374/2004 for Action Plan on Cetaceans Conservation in the Black Sea Romanian waters
- ❖ Government Emergency Ordinance No. 23/2008 on fishing and aquaculture
- ❖ Order No. 342/2008 on minimal size of the aquatic living resources
- ❖ Order No. 449/2008 on technical characteristics and practice conditions for fishing gears used in the commercial fishing
- ❖ Annual fishing prohibition Orders
- ❖ Law No. 253/2011 amending paragraph (3) of art. 67 of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 23/2008 on fishing and aquaculture.

The overall responsibility for fisheries policy in Romania falls under authority of the National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (NAFA), subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. NAFA draw up the strategy and legal framework for fisheries in Romania and carry out the implementation of technical measures and the control of regulations in fisheries and aquaculture. Fishing and aquaculture entitlements are managed similar for inland and marine fisheries activities by NAFA.

Ministry of Environment and Forests draws up specific legal acts regarding environment protection, waters management as well as authorization procedures for all activities, including fisheries enterprises.

7. Activities planned for next year

- monitoring the strandings to reduced the mortality induced by fishing activity
- organize new photo-identification sessions and awareness campaigns
- special protection of spawning areas, feeding and wintering fishery resources and marine mammals
- promote the research for the purpose of improving gear, equipment and fishing techniques
- exchange of scientific research data between ACCOBAMS Parties
- promote transparency in the implementation of the agreement (participation of representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the meeting of the parties, participation of the public in implementing the agreement at national level)
 - developing inter-institutional partnerships
- propose legislative and regulatory reforms to improve biodiversity protection, taking into account the European Marine Strategy
- promote of stronger integration and development of research, awareness and scientific partnerships in the fields of monitoring, control, protection and management of the Black Sea ecosystem and its living resources
- elaborate studies for the impact assesement of economic activity on dolphins

Fisheries management in the Black Sea still requires strengthening and regional harmonization of the regulatory and legal framework, especially with regard to the conservation and protection of the migratory species.